

# Chapter Two: Planning

## Creating a Family Disaster Plan



# Creating A Plan

*Discuss with your family the reasons for creating a disaster plan and talk about what to do in each emergency situation.*

## Earthquake Safe Spots

- ❖ Know the earthquake safe spots in your house. Safe spots are away from dangers that can cause injury, such as glass breaking from windows or mirrors, refrigerators, kitchen cabinets, falling bricks, and unsecured furniture falling over. The best way for families to remember these spots is to have home earthquake drills and to physically practice going to safe locations in each room of the house.

## Reunification Plan

- ❖ After a major emergency, your family should have two places to meet:
  - A place outside your home in case of damage to your house
  - A place outside your neighborhood if you cannot return home
- ❖ Know the disaster policy of the school or daycare center your children attend. Make plans to have someone pick up your children following an emergency if you are not able to do so. Fill out the necessary release forms ahead of time.
- ❖ Designate a relative or friend who lives at least 200 miles away, or preferably out of the state, as your family “out-of-state” contact. Everyone in the family should know your contact’s phone number and carry it with them.

## Communications

Phone lines and cell phones may be overwhelmed immediately following a disaster, making it difficult to reach people. There are several things to keep in mind when trying to communicate with others during this time:

- ❖ Know where nearby pay phones are located. Have change on hand. They may be working when residential or business phones are not.
- ❖ In an emergency, when using a phone, if you pick it up and do not immediately hear a dial tone, ***do not hang up***. Stay on the line and wait for the operator or a dial tone. If you hang up, you put yourself “at the end of the line” all over again.
- ❖ Use your out-of-area contact as the point person. It is often easier to successfully call someone who is at least 200 miles away than someone who is local. If you and other members of your family leave messages with them, this will facilitate your reunification.
- ❖ Amateur (ham) radio is another good means of communication. Check with San José’s Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) on licensing and training opportunities at **[www.sjraces.org](http://www.sjraces.org)**.

## Transportation

Major and minor roadways and bridges may become severely damaged during a major event. Be sure to plan for this ahead of time.

- ❖ Have a plan for returning home from work by alternate means. Map out different routes to get to and from work.
- ❖ Consider how you would use public transportation options if driving is not possible.
- ❖ Always carry a street map with you in case you need to find alternate ways of getting somewhere.

## Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Make sure all family members, especially children, know what to do if the smoke or carbon monoxide detectors go off in the home.

Teach your children how to **Stop, Drop and Roll**. Remember that most home fires occur at night when it is dark and you may have no electricity.

- ❖ Have a flashlight within reach near your bed.
- ❖ Practice your home evacuation plan at least one a year.
- ❖ Close doors when leaving the house to help slow down the spread of fire.
- ❖ Do not wait to go out as a group. You have ***less than two minutes*** to get out of a burning home, because fire doubles in size every sixty seconds.
- ❖ Crawl on the floor if exiting a room or hall way filled with smoke---*don't stand up!*
- ❖ Take short, shallow breathes when traveling through smoke.
- ❖ Once you have evacuated, do not reenter a burning structure.

# Emergency Supplies

*Plan to be on your own for a minimum of 72 hours following a disaster!*

Immediately after an earthquake, it is possible there will be no electricity, water, gas, home phone service, banking services, medical aid, or stores with supplies. The better prepared you are, the better position you will be in to help your family and neighbors.

There are seven types of basic supplies you should have in the event of a disaster or emergency:

- ❖ Water
- ❖ Food
- ❖ Basic First Aid
- ❖ Tools
- ❖ Clothing and Bedding
- ❖ Special Personal Items (medical prescriptions, etc.)
- ❖ Mini-Survival Kit or “Go-Kit”



## Water

*Water is the most important life-saving supply you can store!*

## Storage

Water is safe only if it is tap water that has been properly stored, or if it is store-bought, bottled water that has been properly stored and sealed airtight.

- ❖ Store two gallons of water per person per day.
- ❖ Keep at least a three-day supply of water for each person in your household.
- ❖ Store additional water for your pets and possible visitors.
- ❖ Store two gallons of purchased distilled water for any individuals with chronic health problems, including weakened immune systems.

- ❖ Replace your stored water every six months. You can do it when you reset your clocks at Daylight Savings Time and Standard Time. Use the old supply to water your plants.
- ❖ Label water containers with the date stored.
- ❖ Specially sealed, airtight pouches of water may be stored up to five years. Check the label for an expiration date. These pouches can be purchased where earthquake supplies are sold.
- ❖ Store tap water in clean, food-grade plastic containers. Do not store in used milk containers, which tend to leak over time.
- ❖ Place all containers in a cool, dark, easy-to-reach location, secure from animals. Avoid storing water in garages or attics where it can get too hot.

### Purification

Water that is properly stored is safe to drink. Only treat your stored water if:

- ❖ Labels show the water has been stored longer than six months
- ❖ The water has an unusual odor
- ❖ The container is leaking
- ❖ The seal does not appear to be airtight
- ❖ You have any concerns about the water's safety

### Boiling

- ❖ Boil your stored water for at least one minute. Let it cool, then drink it or use it to prepare food. Boiling is the preferred method of purification.

### Chlorine

- ❖ You can use household liquid bleach to kill most bacteria. Use only regular household liquid bleach. Do **not** use scented or color-safe bleaches, or those with added cleaners.

- ❖ Add a measured  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon or 16 drops of bleach to each gallon of water. Shake or stir, then let it stand for 30 minutes. A slight chlorine taste and smell is normal and safe. This formula works for both regular and concentrated bleach.

After using these methods to purify your water, you can improve the taste by pouring it back and forth between two clean containers.

### Emergency Sources of Non-Potable (Not Drinkable) Water

Water from the water heater, toilet tank, pool or hot tub can be used with soap for washing down surfaces, cleaning tools and washing your body. Your purified water is meant to keep you alive, use it only for drinking and food preparation.

If you run out of purified drinking water, you can use the water from your water heater for drinking after you strain and treat it. To strain it, pour it through a clean cloth or layers of paper towels. Then treat this water following the directions given above.

### Food

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that:

- ❖ Need little or no refrigeration or cooking
- ❖ Are compact and light weight
- ❖ Do not need to have water added
- ❖ Are foods you like to eat
- ❖ Are low in sodium
- ❖ Have a long shelf-life

### Suggested Foods

- ❖ Canned meats, fruits, vegetables, juices, milk and soup
- ❖ High energy foods such as peanut butter and jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix and nuts
- ❖ Comfort foods such as cookies, hard candy, cereal, instant coffee or tea



### General Tips

- ❖ Most emergency food should be stored in a cool, dark and dry place at 40° to 60° F.
- ❖ Even if the electricity goes out, the food in your refrigerator will stay cold for 24 hours if the door is kept closed. Perishable food in the refrigerator should be eaten first. Eat food from the freezer next. When that is gone, eat the non-perishable food in the cupboard.
- ❖ Use a permanent marking pen to write the purchase date on each package.
- ❖ Rotate your supplies every 6 to 12 months to ensure freshness.
- ❖ Don't store food near gasoline, oil or other petroleum products because smells can be absorbed into the food. Food may also absorb odors from soap and cleaning supplies.
- ❖ Store food in airtight, sealed plastic or metal containers. Take precautions to keep out insects and rodents.

## First Aid Supplies

Assemble a complete first aid kit for your home and a smaller one for each car. Emergency first aid information can be found in the “customer guide” section of the telephone book White Pages.

Items in your home’s first aid kit should include:

- ❖ Sterile adhesive bandages
- ❖ Sterile gauze pads (6+)
- ❖ Triangular bandages (3)
- ❖ Sterile rolled bandages (6 rolls)
- ❖ Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- ❖ Scissors and tweezers
- ❖ Instant hot and cold packs
- ❖ Ace bandage
- ❖ Needle
- ❖ Moistened towelettes
- ❖ Thermometer
- ❖ Sterile saline to wash burns
- ❖ Magnifier
- ❖ Waterless hand cleaner
- ❖ Activated charcoal
- ❖ Antiseptic
- ❖ Hydrogen peroxide
- ❖ Latex gloves (2 pairs)
- ❖ Sunscreen
- ❖ First aid manual
- ❖ Prescription medication
- ❖ Assortment of safety pins

If you or someone in your family requires special medication, be sure to have a 14-day supply or at least an empty medication container with the prescription label on hand. You can also make a photocopy of your prescriptions before you have them filled; keep these in your wallet for easy reference.

In addition, recommend keeping a supply of the followings:

- ❖ Non-prescription drugs
- ❖ Aspirin or other pain reliever
- ❖ Vitamins
- ❖ Syrup of Ipecac to induce vomiting when instructed by the Poison Control Center  
1(800)876-4766
- ❖ Antacid for upset stomach
- ❖ Laxative
- ❖ Anti-diarrhea medication

## Tools and Supplies

Having the right tools and supplies can be essential in a major emergency.

Some suggestions include:

- ❖ Battery operated radio with extra batteries
- ❖ Flashlight with extra batteries
- ❖ Chemical light sticks
- ❖ Fire extinguisher (small A-B-C type)
- ❖ Shutoff tools for gas and water
- ❖ Shovel
- ❖ Pliers
- ❖ Signal flare
- ❖ Tent
- ❖ Camp stove and fuel
- ❖ Waterproof matches
- ❖ Needle and thread
- ❖ Crowbar
- ❖ Rope
- ❖ Plastic sheeting
- ❖ Mess kit or paper cups, plates, plastic utensils
- ❖ Multi-purpose knife
- ❖ Non-electric can opener
- ❖ Portable toilet or 5 gallon bucket with plastic liner bags
- ❖ Cooking utensils
- ❖ Toilet paper
- ❖ Garbage bags
- ❖ Whistle
- ❖ Map of local area
- ❖ Money (small bills and coins)
- ❖ San Jose *Prepared!* manual
- ❖ Proof of current residency
- ❖ Soap
- ❖ Duct tape
- ❖ Plastic storage container and plastic bags

## Clothing and Bedding

Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person. In addition, pack the following items:

- ❖ Sturdy shoes or work boots
- ❖ Heavy work gloves
- ❖ Rain gear
- ❖ Mask and eye protection
- ❖ Hat or cap
- ❖ Long pants
- ❖ Long-sleeve shirt
- ❖ Blankets and sleeping bags

## Important Personal Items

Remember family members with special needs, such as infants, the elderly or disabled persons.

### Adults

- ❖ Prescription drugs (e.g., heart, high blood pressure, diabetes)
- ❖ Dental needs, dentures
- ❖ Contact lenses, supplies
- ❖ Extra eye glasses or prescription
- ❖ Extra cane
- ❖ Hearing aid batteries
- ❖ Personal hygiene, sanitary supplies

### Children

- ❖ Comfort items (e.g., games, toys, stuffed animals, blankets)

### Infants

- ❖ Diapers
- ❖ Powdered milk, formula
- ❖ Bottles
- ❖ Medications
- ❖ Toys, comfort items, blankets
- ❖ Special foods

### Pets

It's important to remember your pets, too.

- ❖ Always keep a collar and ID tag on all your pets.
- ❖ If you evacuate with your dog, bring a leash.
- ❖ Store a one week supply of animal food, water, dishes, kitty litter and box.
- ❖ Have a carrier large enough to comfortably confine your cat or dog.
- ❖ Keep a strong rope or chain handy and a large screw-in device to restrain your dog in case fences are down.

The Office of Emergency Services has an “Emergency Pet Preparedness” brochure available for people who want more information 408-277-4595.

### Mini-Survival Kits for Car and Work

You may not be at home when a disaster strikes. Keep a small emergency pack in your car and at your workplace to help you survive until you can make your way home. Some of the supplies you may want to include are:

- ❖ Flat, sturdy and comfortable shoes
- ❖ Small first aid kit and manual
- ❖ Toilet paper, zipper bags
- ❖ Fire extinguisher (A-B-C type)
- ❖ Flashlight, extra batteries
- ❖ AM radio, extra batteries
- ❖ Heavy gloves
- ❖ Small tool kit
- ❖ Money (small bills and coins)
- ❖ Snacks
- ❖ Water
- ❖ Flares
- ❖ Mylar blanket
- ❖ Medication
- ❖ Whistle
- ❖ Local maps

Remember to keep your gas tank at least ½ full because gas station pumps may not be working.

# People with Special Needs

*Individuals with special needs are particularly vulnerable after a disaster.*

Here are some special provisions that are especially important for the elderly and individuals with disabilities:

- ❖ Know your neighbors and co-workers. Explain the nature of your disability to them and let them know how they can help you during an emergency. Arrange for a neighbor to be your “disaster buddy.”
- ❖ Keep a flashlight with extra batteries, a whistle and red flag next to your bed. If you become trapped, hang the flag in the window or use the whistle or flashlight to attract attention.
- ❖ Keep at least a one-week supply of essential medication or special foods in your emergency/evacuation kit. Remember to include hearing aid batteries.
- ❖ If a family member is blind and uses a guide dog, suggest that s/he keep an extra cane at home and at work. After an emergency, the guide dog may be injured or too frightened to help.
- ❖ If you have a hearing impairment, install visible fire alarms with a flashing strobe light.
- ❖ If you rely on electricity for life support or mobility, consider buying a small back-up generator.
- ❖ Develop emergency information cards that include all critical information including your name, address, any special needs and blood type. Remember to include the names of family members or neighbors who do not speak English. Keep a copy with you at all times.
- ❖ If you drive an adapted vehicle, consider teaching a neighbor or friend how to operate that vehicle.

# Vital Documents

*The proper documentation can make all the difference.*

You will need to document any property loss for insurance and income tax claims, or when applying for financial assistance. Make sure you have access to documents needed for completing the application forms to eliminate delay and frustration.

If possible, make two sets of your important documents. Store each in a different place (e.g., safe deposit box or with your out-of-state contact) so if one set is damaged, a second set will be available.

Take photographs or a video of your home and its contents for insurance claim documentation. Make a written inventory of your belongings, including the purchase price and date. If possible, keep receipts of major purchases. If you have a computer, store your inventory information on disks or CDs and keep copies of them with different people. Important documents include:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ✓ Personal Identification                                       | ✓ Social Security numbers                               |
| ✓ Wills, deeds, insurance policies                              | ✓ Stocks, bonds   |
| ✓ Contracts   | ✓ Bank account numbers                                  |
| ✓ Credit card numbers   | ✓ Tax returns for 7 years                               |
| ✓ Photo inventory of household goods                            | ✓ Titles to vehicles                                    |
| ✓ Important telephone numbers                                   | ✓ Passports   |
| ✓ Family records (birth, death, marriage, divorce certificates) | ✓ Professional licenses, credentials                    |
| ✓ Medical records and cards (Medicare/Medical)                  | ✓ Family photos, including pets, to help locate if lost |



# Evacuation

*An earthquake, fire, landslide, hazardous materials incident, or gas leak may arise which forces you to evacuate your home or neighborhood.*

## Planning Ahead

The best time to plan for an evacuation is now, when things are calm. You should:

- ❖ Be familiar with the primary exits, such as doors and windows, from each room.
- ❖ Know the location of escape ladders and ropes.
- ❖ Count doors to exit in apartment buildings or condos, in case of smoke-filled hallways.
- ❖ Have emergency supplies easily accessible to take with you.
- ❖ Know where the utility shutoff valves are and be sure that everyone else in your family knows how to use them.
- ❖ Create a detailed map with primary evacuation routes highlighted.
- ❖ To evacuate by car, locate at least two primary street routes going in different directions away from your neighborhood. Assess them for potential dangers and obstacles such as downed trees, power lines or overpasses that could collapse.
- ❖ To evacuate by foot, plan at least two routes that might include hiking trails, bicycle paths or gates through a neighbor's yard.
- ❖ If flooding threatens, know the safest evacuation routes away from your home or office to high ground.
- ❖ Make sure that everyone who regularly spends time in your home (e.g., babysitters, housekeeper, and grandparents) knows your evacuation plan.

In the event of any emergency, most people can't think as clearly as they usually do, so it is important to consider these questions:

- ❖ If you have less than five minutes to evacuate, what are the most important things you would like to carry with you?
- ❖ Where are these things located?
- ❖ Items you can use to carry things: pillow cases, duffle bags, suitcase.

Remember that some emergency shelters do not allow pets due to health code restrictions. If you must leave your pet behind:

- ❖ Make sure you pet leave your pet in an area that is free from hazards, such as gas leaks, falling objects, windows and flooding.
- ❖ The area should be confined to protect your pet and make recovery easier.
- ❖ Leave plenty of water and food. Dogs require almost as much water as adults, one gallon per day; cats drink about half that amount.
- ❖ If you pet is in a cage, make sure the cage is secure.
- ❖ Leave your animal's medication and instructions for administering it.
- ❖ Leave a note on the door indicating where you expect to be. Include the name of the pet, where it is confined, and the name, address and phone number of your veterinarian.

